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NORTH CHICAGO -- U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, said he has secured the final \$99 million for completion of the James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center.

The funding was included in the omnibus appropriations bill passed by Congress this week. The bill, headed to the president's desk for signature, will fund a new \$120 million health-care center at the joint VA/Navy hospital, keeping projections of a 2010 opening on schedule.

"This is the final funding component to make our dream come true -- a new \$100 million state-of-the-art Veterans-Navy hospital that ensures veterans will receive state-of-the-art health care in northern Illinois," Kirk said.

The first part of the project, now under way, is a \$16 million parking garage and new site entrance at Green Bay Road. The new \$99 million appropriation will pave the way for a large ambulatory care center scheduled for construction next year.

Once completed, the joint VA/Navy hospital will improve health care for more than 50,000 veterans, 40,000 sailors, 30,000 dependents and 10,000 military retirees living in northern Illinois.